

**REMARKS**

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated March 6, 2007, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on June 6, 2007. Applicants submit this response to place the application in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Claims 1-31 remain pending following entry of this response.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1- 2, 6, 13, 17 -19, 21 - 23, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Bays et al.* (*Bays* hereinafter) (US Patent No. 6,519,603 B1, issued: February 11, 2003).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants have argued that *Bays* does not disclose “applying a set of state rules to determine a first state of the annotation based on the annotation data.” The Examiner has rejected this argument, maintaining that *Bays* discloses this element in “filtering and transforming the entered annotation content based on the context of the reader can be used to retrieve only relevant information... to present the information in a form easily understood by the discipline or role of the reader” at col. 3, lines 25-30. However, this step of filtering and transforming by *Bays* is not the same as, or even analogous to, applying a set of state rules as claimed. Filtering and transforming the entered annotation content based on the context of the reader is not applying a set of state rules to determine a first state of the annotation based on the annotation data. The context of the user is not the same as a set of state rules. For example, the context of the user may be the workgroup the user is assigned to (e.g. manager, engineer, or accountant). Contrast this with state rules which are not user related and instead relate to determining the state of the annotations themselves, “*based on the annotation data*”. Thus, the context of the user has nothing whatsoever to do with determining the state of an annotation based on the underlying annotation data. In fact, the context of the user

(per Bays) is merely used to determine how the data will be displayed – it determines nothing about the state of the data, whether on the basis of the annotation data or anything else.

The Examiner points out that the rejected claims do not recite “using state rules.” Applicants apologize for the confusion, and intended “using state rules” to mean “applying a set of state rules.”

The Examiner further argues that *Bays* discloses “providing a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation data in each record” at col. 9, lines 60-65. However, col. 9, lines 60-65 is directed towards the administrator indicating which categories and attributes of categories are to be retained, which attribute names are to be changed and how, and more generally, which transformations should be applied to the annotation content. Having an administrator indicate when these changes should take place (retaining categories and attributes of categories or not, changing attribute names or not, and how to transform annotation content) is not the same as providing a set of state rules. Nowhere does *Bays* disclose making such changes “based on the annotation data in each record.” Therefore, the administrator is not providing a set of state rules, the administrator is merely indicating when and how these changes may take place.

Additionally, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses more details with respect to the plurality of states for the annotation at Figure 2 “STATUS” APPRAISAL and col. 7, lines 29-31. Applicants are unclear of what Examiner means by disclosing more details with respect to the plurality of states for the annotation. However, Col. 7, lines 29-31 reads “as a result, this exemplary query combines attributes of data along with the annotation content to qualify the results.” The exemplary query referred to in the cited passage is querying attributes of data in the database, as well as querying annotation content of the data. Thus, the exemplary query queries data and its annotations, and does not “provid[e] a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation data in each record.” Therefore, *Bays* does not disclose “providing a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation data in each record.”

Therefore, the claims are believed to be allowable, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3 - 5, 9 -12, 14 -16, 20, 24 - 25, and 27 - 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bays et al. (Bays hereinafter) (US Patent No. 6,519,603 B1, issued: February 11, 2003), in view of Setya (US Patent App. Pub. No. 2006/0111953 A1, filed: October 16, 2003).

The Examiner argues that a prima facie case of obviousness has been met because the three elements have been met. Respectfully, the Examiner has mischaracterized the three elements. Specifically, the examiner omits the element requiring that the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. See MPEP § 2143.

Instead, the Examiner characterizes this element as a requirement for both references to teach features that are directed to the same industry field of database management systems, such as, records and states. However, while *Bays* and *Setya* may be in a similar industry field, the combination of the references does not teach or suggest all the claim limitations. For these 103(a) rejections, *Bays* is relied upon to teach or suggest some of the claim limitations. As discussed above, *Bays* does not teach or suggest these claim limitations. Therefore, Applicants submit the present rejection is obviated.

Therefore, the claims are believed to be allowable, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

If the Examiner believes any issues remain that prevent this application from going to issue, the Examiner is strongly encouraged to contact Gero McClellan, attorney of record, at (336) 643-3065, to discuss strategies for moving prosecution forward toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted, and  
**S-signed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.4,**

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